

5. U.S. Department of Agriculture

■ Reorganizing “the People’s Department”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is undergoing a historic reorganization to improve coordination among USDA’s broad range of programs and Agencies. This reorganization was authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-354), signed into law October 13, 1994. This reorganization, which is underway across the country, affects headquarters and field structures. It will reduce the number of organizational units, save a projected \$4.1 billion over 5 years, and reduce staff by more than 13,000 over 5 years.

In addition to combining program operations, USDA closed or consolidated some 1,100 farm service field offices to provide “one-stop shopping” for customers participating in various USDA farm programs. Savings are being achieved through consolidating administrative services within mission areas. The goal of this reorganization is to cut costs to the taxpayers while improving service to USDA customers.

The new USDA organizational structure includes six Under Secretary positions and three Assistant Secretary positions. Each of these officials has overall responsibility for a key mission area of the Department and supervises the work of the Agencies reporting to him or her. Programs of the various mission areas are described in the following chapters.

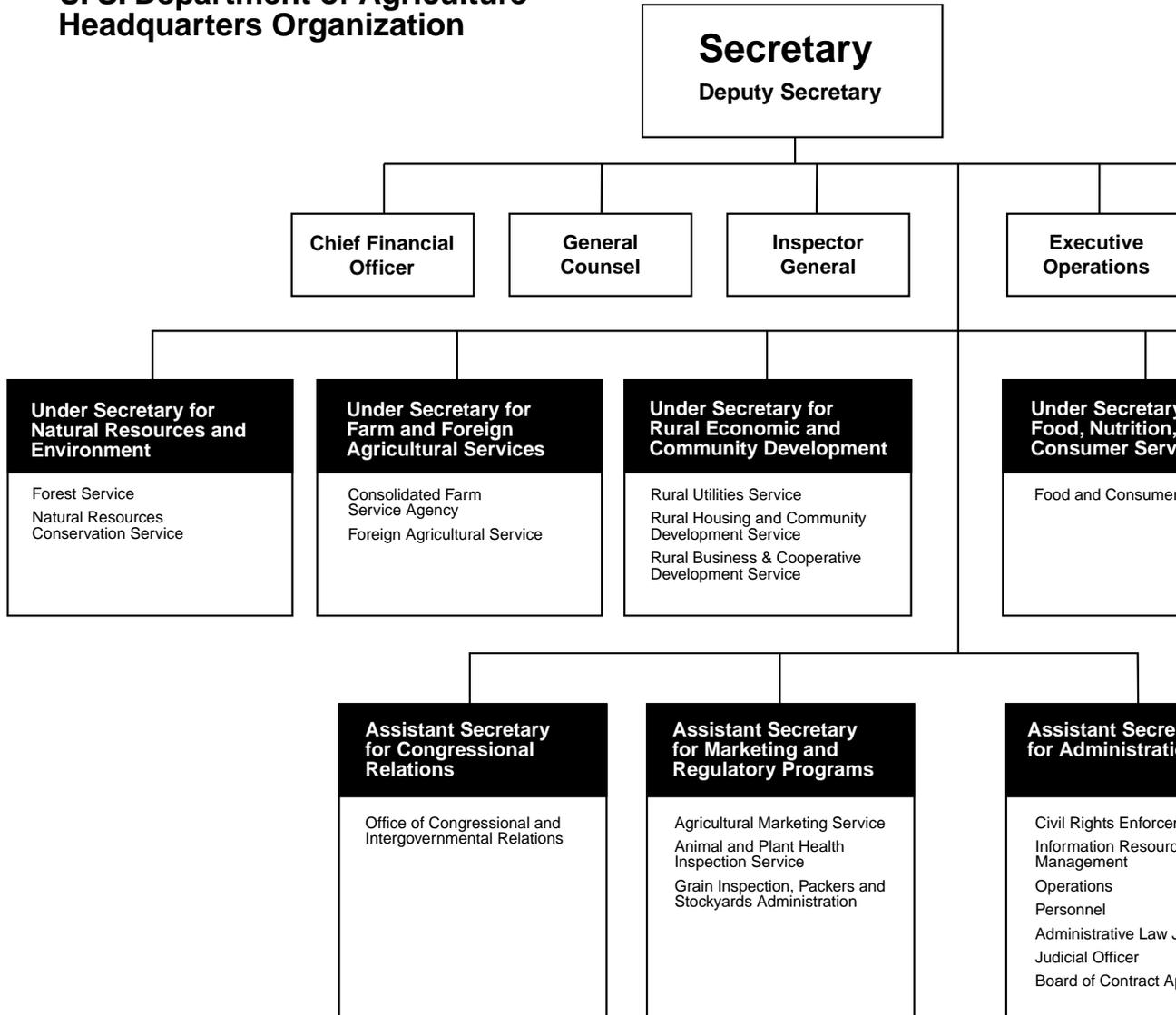
These major structural changes are leading to a new, streamlined USDA:

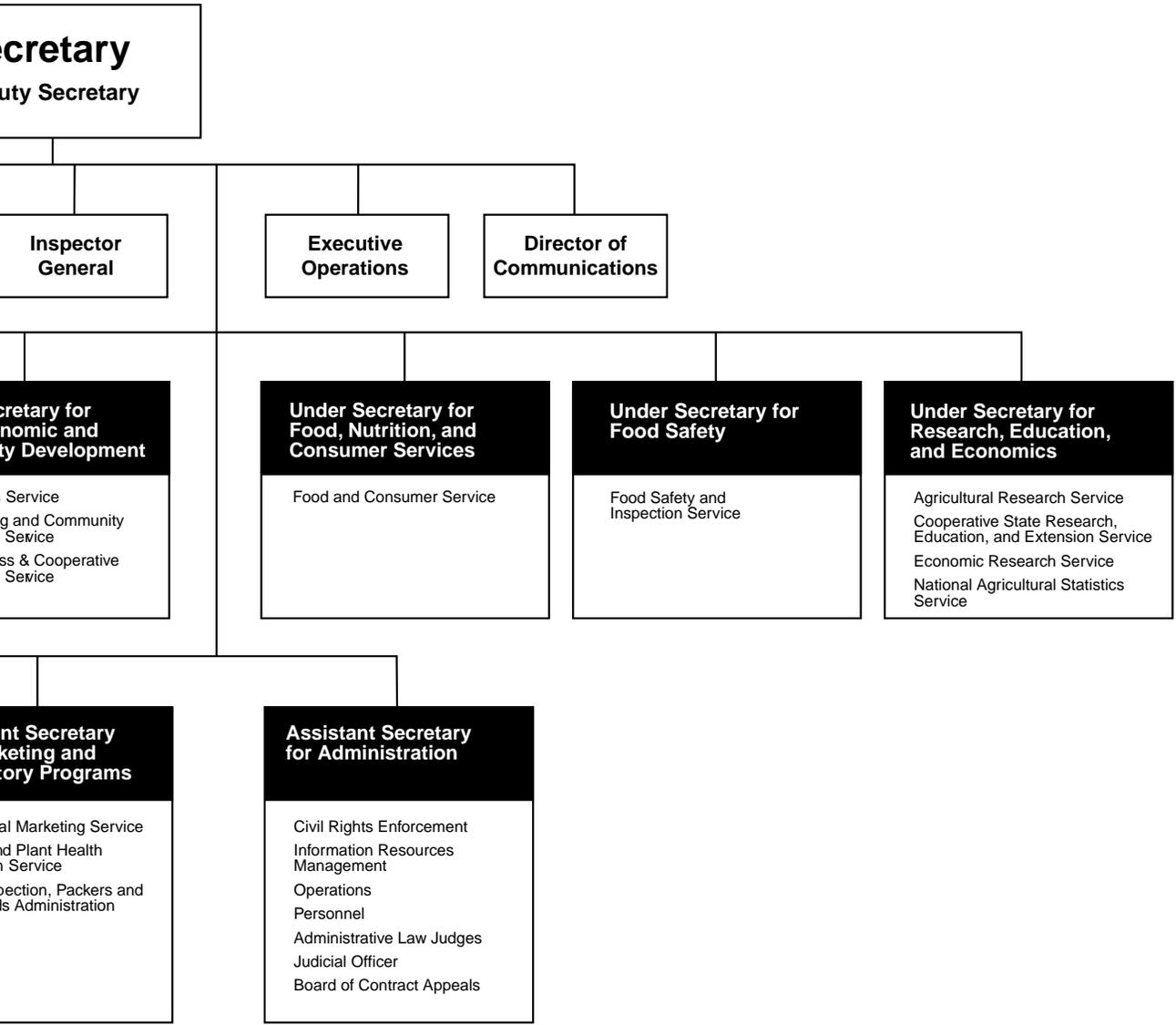
- Reduction and collocation of over 1,100 farm service agency field offices to provide one-stop service for customers of USDA’s farm programs. Offices are combining or sharing space, equipment, and support personnel to reduce overhead expenses and provide one-stop service.
- Combining farmer programs in a new Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CFSA), which incorporates the functions of the previous Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, and the farm-lending activities of the former Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). CFSA is charged with administering commodity price and income support programs, crop insurance, farm lending, the Agricultural Conservation Program, and the Conservation Reserve Program. This agency will operate out of combined field offices to provide one-stop service for USDA customers.
- Elevating USDA’s food safety activities by establishing an Under Secretary for Food Safety. All USDA activities related to food safety—including functions previously performed by the Agricultural Marketing Service under the

Egg Products Inspection Act and the salmonella enteritidis and pathogen reduction activities previously performed by the Agricultural Plant Health Inspection Service—report to this official. Food safety activities are thus separated from USDA's marketing activities.

- Focusing rural development work in three new agencies reporting to the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development. The Rural Utilities Service combines the telephone and electric programs of the former Rural Electrification Administration (REA) with the water and sewer programs of the former Rural Development Administration (RDA). The Rural Housing and Community Development Service combines FmHA housing programs with RDA and REA rural community loan programs. The Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service combines the former Agricultural Cooperative Service, the Alternative Agricultural Commercialization Center, and the business development programs of RDA and REA.
- Establishing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which administers all agriculture-related conservation programs except those assigned to the new CFSA. NRCS has authority for the following key conservation cost-share programs: the Wetlands Reserve Program, Water Bank Program, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act Program, Forestry Incentives Program, Great Plains Conservation Program, and Farms for the Future Program.
- Establishing a Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service that combines the former Extension Service with the former Cooperative State Research Service. The National Agricultural Library is incorporated into the Agricultural Research Service.
- Establishing a Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration which combines the responsibilities of the former Federal Grain Inspection Service and the Packers and Stockyards Administration.
- Consolidating administrative staffs to provide central personnel and administrative functions for all agencies and offices reporting to the subcabinet official for the mission area.
- Establishing an independent appeals process that replaces the separate administrative appeal procedures of FmHA and ASCS with an independent process through a new National Appeals Division reporting directly to the Secretary.
- Establishing an Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis to review major regulations and provide cost/benefit evaluations.

U. S. Department of Agriculture Headquarters Organization





November 1994

■ Programs Serving All Mission Areas

Some programs serve the entire Department, crossing mission area lines. Among these, the Office of the Chief Economist, Office of the Inspector General, and Office of the Chief Financial Officer report directly to the Secretary of Agriculture. Other offices serving the entire Department report to the Assistant Secretary for Administration; these include the Office of Personnel, Office of Civil Rights Enforcement, Office of Operations, and Office of Information Resources Management. The new AmeriCorps program works with programs in several mission areas.

■ Office of the Chief Economist

The Office of the Chief Economist advises the Secretary on policies and programs affecting U.S. agriculture and rural areas. This advice includes assessments of USDA program proposals, legislative proposals, and general economic developments that have implications for agriculture and rural areas.

In addition, the World Agricultural Outlook Board and the Office of Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis report to the Office of the Chief Economist.

World Agricultural Outlook Board

The World Agricultural Outlook Board is USDA's focal point for forecasts and projections of global commodity markets. Each month the Board brings together interagency committees of experts to forecast the supply, use, and price of major commodities in the United States and abroad. The committees also clear agricultural forecasts published by other USDA agencies. This teamwork assures that USDA forecasts are objective and consistent.

Because the weather is vital to crop forecasts, specialists from the Board work side-by-side with weather forecasters from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to monitor the weather and assess its effects on crops. They provide timely information on potential changes in global production. In related work, the Board also coordinates departmentwide activity on long-term economic projections, remote sensing, and climate.

Office of Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis

This office is responsible for coordinating, reviewing, and approving all risk assessments of major regulations of the Department related to human health, human safety, or the environment. In addition, it provides direction to USDA agencies on appropriate methods of risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis and serves as a focal point on matters relating to risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis.

■ Office of Inspector General

USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), the first civilian OIG in the Federal Government, was established in 1962 and became fully operational in 1963. It was created after a well-knit agricultural fraud scheme showed that better coordination between audit and investigative organizations was needed, and it has evolved into its current structure through successive changes in legislation and leadership.

OIG conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to USDA's programs and operations. It provides leadership and coordination, and recommends policies for activities that will prevent and detect fraud and abuse and promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in USDA programs and operations. Furthermore, the OIG keeps the Secretary and Congress fully informed of problems and deficiencies relating to administration of USDA programs and operations, and the actions designed to correct such problems and deficiencies.

During FY 1994, audit and investigative efforts resulted in approximately \$82.3 million in recoveries, collections, fines, restitutions, claims established, administrative penalties, and costs avoided. Management agreed to put an additional \$101.3 million to better use. OIG also identified \$69.3 million in questioned costs that cannot be recovered. Investigative efforts resulted in 856 indictments and 886 convictions.

■ Office of Chief Financial Officer

USDA, through the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, publishes annual financial statements to inform the general public, Congress, and others about its financial operations. As trustee for substantial public monies, the Department has a fiduciary responsibility to tell taxpayers how well it has met its objectives, how well the current year's performance compares to previous years, and what plans the Department has to improve or maintain its operations.

USDA is the third largest civilian department of the U.S. Government, overseeing a variety of agencies, Government corporations, and other entities that employ more than 108,000 people at over 15,000 locations in all States and 80 countries. Budget authority for Departmental programs in FY 1994 totaled \$65.3 billion.

■ Office of Civil Rights Enforcement

The Office of Civil Rights Enforcement (OCRE) coordinates USDA civil rights programs to prevent and resolve civil rights problems. Under the counseling and mediation program, an employee or applicant who believes he or she has been discriminated against or retaliated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disabling condition may file a complaint. In 1995, there are six regional service centers in Washington, DC, Atlanta, GA, New Orleans, LA, Denver, CO, Davis, CA, and Kansas City, MO.

Any eligible person being denied service or assistance may file a program complaint against agencies or recipients administering federally conducted or federally assisted programs of USDA. Through its evaluation and investigation program, OCRE conducts reviews to help determine compliance and noncompliance in employment programs, delivery of benefits, and services in Federally conducted and Federally assisted programs.

■ Office of Personnel

Table 5-1.

USDA staff year history

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees*</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees*</i>
1948	60,815	1973	104,104
1949	63,063	1974	101,430
1950	67,560	1975	103,779
1951	66,150	1976	109,276
1952	62,825	1977	113,085
1953	62,492	1978	118,563
1954	63,309	1979	122,809
1955	64,191	1980	125,185
1956	69,423	1981	117,440
1957	74,215	1982	111,853
1958	77,264	1983	109,773
1959	79,998	1984	108,598
1960	81,585	1985	106,665
1961	85,238	1986	102,997
1962	89,168	1987	102,579
1963	94,527	1988	106,552
1964	94,781	1989	109,567
1965	94,548	1990	110,754
1966	98,688	1991	110,357
1967	102,175	1992	113,405
1968	105,628	1993	112,457
1969	101,848	1994	108,132
1970	100,860	1995**	108,053
1971	102,698	2000**	100,950
1972	104,540		

*Full-time equivalent (FTE). For example, two half-time employees would count as one FTE.

**Projections from USDA Streamlining Plan, February 1995.

■ *In 1995, USDA has over 1,000 employees with targeted disabilities in permanent full-time positions.*

Table 5-2.

Where do USDA employees work?

<i>States & Territories</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees***</i>	<i>States & Territories</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees***</i>
Alabama	1,257	Nevada.....	342
Alaska	1,032	New Hampshire	285
Arizona	1,648	New Jersey	582
Arkansas	1,953	New Mexico	1,368
California	7,730	New York	1,090
Colorado	2,664	North Carolina.....	1,869
Connecticut	170	North Dakota.....	810
Delaware	215	Ohio	883
District of Columbia	7,297	Oklahoma	937
Florida	1,541	Oregon.....	5,145
Georgia	2,619	Pennsylvania.....	1,657
Guam	27	Puerto Rico.....	653
Hawaii	386	Rhode Island.....	44
Idaho	2,701	South Carolina	1,000
Illinois	1,644	South Dakota	835
Indiana	771	Tennessee	1,104
Iowa	1,891	Texas.....	3,740
Kansas	1,165	Trust Territories of the	
Kentucky	1,162	Pacific Islands	3
Louisiana	2,938	U.S. Virgin Islands	7
Maine	291	Utah	1,461
Maryland	3,141	Vermont	260
Massachusetts	359	Virginia.....	2,224
Michigan	1,256	Washington	2,468
Minnesota	1,699	West Virginia	718
Mississippi	2,011	Wisconsin	1,534
Missouri	3,714	Wyoming	728
Montana	2,744		
Nebraska	1,411		

***Permanent, full-time employees

<i>Other Countries</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees***</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>	<i>Number of USDA employees***</i>
Argentina	7	China	6
Australia	10	Colombia	2
Austria	3	Costa Rica	3
Bahamas	2	Denmark	1
Belgium	6	Dominican Republic	4
Brazil	3	Ecuador	2
British Virgin Islands	23	Egypt	3
Bulgaria	2	El Salvador	2
Canada	3	France	5
Chile	2	Germany	4

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Table 5-2 continued.

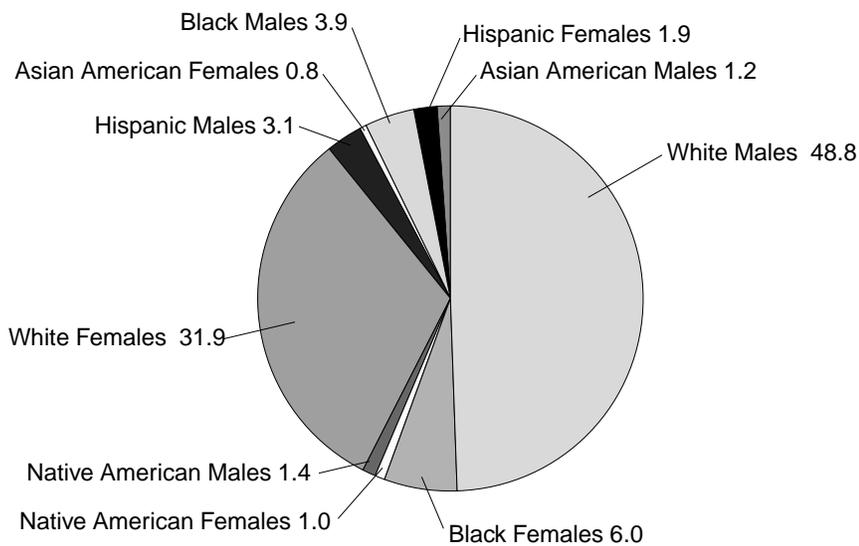
Where do USDA employees work?

<i>Other Countries</i>	<i>Number USDA employees***</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>	<i>Number USDA employees***</i>
Greece	1	Northern Mariana Islands	7
Guatemala	6	Pakistan	1
Honduras	2	Panama	1
Hong Kong	1	Philippines	2
India	2	Poland	2
Indonesia	2	Russia	5
Italy	5	Saudi Arabia	1
Ivory Coast	1	Singapore	2
Jamaica	1	South Africa	1
Japan	9	South Korea	4
Kenya	1	Spain	2
Malaysia	1	Sweden	1
Marshall Island	2	Switzerland	2
Mexico	26	Thailand	2
Micronesia	14	Tunisia	1
Morocco	1	Turkey	2
Netherlands	3	United Arab Emirates	1
New Zealand	1	United Kingdom	2
Nicaragua	2	Venezuela	2
Nigeria	1		

***Permanent, full-time employees

Figure 5-1.

USDA Workforce Profile by Race and Gender Group



■ Office of Operations

Mail

Each year, USDA receives over 180 million pieces of mail. At the Washington, DC, headquarters alone, over 21 million pieces of mail are handled each year, for an average of about 84,000 pieces of mail processed each workday. Smokey Bear receives more mail than any other individual in the Department. The Headquarters mail operation is an active employer of those with disabilities. Over one-third of the employees are people with disabilities. Working closely with private and public placement organizations, the division has succeeded in bringing these employees into the work force. In recognition of its success in hiring the disabled, the division has received numerous government and private-sector awards.

The mail office is one of USDA's Reinvention Laboratories supporting Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, in which the Department has taken an active role. One advance is a new multipurpose mail sorter, which will reduce staff by at least five employees. Also, USDA is taking the lead in developing Government-wide mail management initiatives that are projected to save over \$2 million by FY 1996.

Procurement Facts and Figures

In FY 1994, USDA awarded approximately 8,000 new contracts, new delivery orders against existing contracts, and contract modifications. These activities, which encompass both administrative and agricultural commodity acquisitions, totalled \$2.9 billion, which reflects awards of \$25,000 and above, and does not address the hundreds of thousands of small purchases that USDA makes each year.

At the end of FY 1994, over 6,000 commercial credit cards had been issued to USDA employees, and the number of cards continues to increase. Procurement personnel can obligate up to \$25,000 per transaction; nonprocurement personnel, who must receive training before a card can be issued, may receive delegated authority to spend up to \$2,500 (the "micropurchase" level) per transaction using the card. The type of item charged ranges broadly. The Modernization of Administrative Processes project office is leading an effort to streamline the credit card systems and make it even more efficient.

In accordance with the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994, Executive Order 12873, and other requirements, USDA has embarked on a program to process administrative procurements electronically. Initial pilot transactions involved electronic transmittal or receipt of Requests for Quotation, vendor quotes, Purchase Orders, and Notices of Award to unsuccessful quoters. USDA was one of a very limited number of executive agencies to successfully accomplish this feat on time. Electronic Commerce represents a new way of doing acquisition which should cut procurement lead time, reduce prices, and give small businesses a better chance to sell goods and services to the Government. The resulting improvements in obtaining goods and services should improve the timeliness and efficiency with which USDA delivers its services to the American public.

Washington Area Strategic Space Plan

The Washington Area Strategic Space plan is a strategy for moving employees from leased space (18 locations) into Government-owned space in a newly constructed building in Beltsville, MD, and a modernized South Building.

The Beltsville Office Facility is designed to house 1,500 employees. The planned facility will be a series of four interconnected two-story buildings on 115 acres in Prince Georges County, MD. A design/build contract was awarded in February 1995. Construction is scheduled to be completed in 1996, when employees will move to the facility and allow construction to begin on the South Building in the downtown complex.

The Department of Agriculture South Building in Washington, DC, was the largest Federal building until the Pentagon was built. The South Building has 1.34 million square feet, over 7 miles of corridors, and 4,300 rooms. The building is over 60 years old and is in need of renovation to create a modern, safe office environment. Renovation will also allow the building to accommodate 8,000 employees, almost 1,500 more than it currently houses. A tunnel runs under Independence Avenue to connect the South Building and the Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building (formerly the Administration Building). Two memorial archways on the third floor also connect the two buildings. The archways were built by private funds in 1936—the west arch in memory of former Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, and the east arch in memory of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, known as the father of Extension. Modernization of the South Building is scheduled for 1997-2003.

■ Office of Information Resources Management

■ **Information Technology Facts and Figures**

- *Over 90 percent of USDA employees have access to a personal computer or a terminal while on the job.*
- *In the first half of 1995, the Telecommunications Service Office Personnel Locator operators handled 36,457 calls.*
- *The USDA headquarters building complex local area network (HQNET) is made up of 23 miles of broadband cable and 9 miles of fiber optic cable; 150 file servers are attached to the headquarters local area network.*
- *On January 31, 1995, the departmental voice mail system had 10,477 subscriber mail boxes. In that month, user voice mail usage (send and receive minutes) went over a million minutes.*
- *The Accessible Technology Program ensures that employees and the general public with disabilities, as well as aging Americans, can provide and receive agricultural information. This program benefits employees nationwide with sight, mobility, speech, and*

hearing impairments. It offers training to managers and supervisors about their responsibilities to employees and the general public with disabilities.

- *Through the Market News Program, the Agricultural Marketing Service collects data on the prices and volumes of agricultural products sold nationwide. The Market News Telecommunications System broadcasts approximately 900 of these reports daily.*
- *AGRICOLA, the National Agricultural Library's bibliographic database, has 3 million computerized citations to worldwide agricultural literature.*
- *The Extension component of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service has a network of 2,400 sites. These sites serve as local citizen participation centers, giving local citizens access to the National Information Infrastructure.*
- *The Forest Service has about 865 "mini-computers" and 18,000 terminals. The Forest Service personnel/payroll information arrives from 135 different electronic data collection points.*
- *The National Agricultural Statistics Service has a database of 3,500,000 names of farms, operators, partnerships, and agribusinesses. Samples are drawn from the database for agricultural surveys.*

■ AmeriCorps/USDA

USDA sponsors approximately 1,200 AmeriCorps members serving in 38 States in urban and rural projects fighting hunger, protecting the environment, and rebuilding rural America. During just their first 2 1/2 half months of service—from September 12 to November 31, 1994—members provided over 360,000 hours of service to their communities. The following examples indicate the breadth of activities performed by AmeriCorps participants:

- Members of the **Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment Team** cook and prepare meals at soup kitchens, conduct nutrition and food safety workshops for the elderly, sort goods at food banks, develop nutrition education programs for schools, provide outreach for the Women's, Infants, and Children nutrition program, work to increase the number of children receiving immunizations, improve participation in the summer feeding program, locate sites for revitalizing community gardens in low-income neighborhoods, assist earthquake victims with emergency food information, and inform pantries about how their clients who are working but are still poor can boost their incomes by using the Earned Income Tax Credit.

- Members of the **Public Lands and Environment Team** working on Forest Service lands do rehabilitation and watershed protection work, construct stream structures for fish habitat, reforest fire-damaged lands, construct and maintain trails for hiking and horseback riding, plant cuttings for riparian and wildlife restorations, maintain and rehabilitate campgrounds and make them accessible for the disabled, improve timber stands, restore historic sites, conduct surveys of threatened and endangered species habitats, remove and install fences, improve wildlife habitats, and hang erosion control netting on roads.

Members of the Public Lands and Environment Team working on private and local municipal lands repair and restore flood-damaged areas, recreate fish habitats, monitor water quality, build community greenhouses, construct nature trails in urban and suburban as well as rural areas, build playgrounds, restore windbreaks originally created by the Civilian Conservation Corps, revegetate coastal marshes, restore collections at the National Arboretum, create a safe haven lot at a public housing development, landscape public high school grounds, clean up urban wetlands, revitalize historical sites, improve camping sites, protect stream banks, create community gardens, and clean out public fountains.

- Members of the **Rural Development Team** provide service on a wide range of projects related to running water and indoor plumbing, sustainable agriculture, emergency response and prevention, fisheries restoration, alternative uses of natural resources, environmental education facilities, community improvement and personal responsibility development, tourism to boost local economies, water quality protection, recycling promotion, American Indian tribal empowerment, water quality protection, rural housing improvement, and cultural resource preservation.